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ABSTRACT

This paper reports that the story of peace education in New Zealand has been one of extremes. While there has been some interest in the subject for decades, it was only in the 1980s that there was any serious activity and widespread debate. In 1984, the conservative National government, which had ruled the country for 9 years, was replaced by a Labour government. An important part of the new Labour government's policy was a strong commitment to a nuclear free New Zealand. As a part of this commitment, there was a strong effort, particularly from 1984 to 1987, to introduce peace education into New Zealand schools. This efforts proved to be extremely controversial. A conservative government was elected in 1990 and the commitment to peace education from the government ended. However, regardless of the official position, peace education seems to have strong support in many quarters. (Contains 10 references.) (DB)

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PEACE EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

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PEACE EDUCATON IN NEW ZEALAND

James Collinge

The story of peace education in New Zealand is one of extremes. While there has been some interest in the subject for many decades, it is only in the 1980s that there has been any serious activity and widespread debate. From 1984 to 1987 particularly there was a strong effort to introduce peace education in New Zealand schools, a move which was extremely controversial.

PEACE EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

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The story of peace education in New Zealand is one of extremes. While there has been some interest in the subject for many decades, it is only in the 1980s that there has been any serious activity and widespread debate. From 1984 to 1987 particularly there was a strong effort to introduce peace education into New Zealand schools, a move which was extremely controversial.

The history of formal interest in peace education in New Zealand schools can be traced back to 1929 when the New Zealand Educational Institute, the union for primary school teachers, recommended that all teachers become active members of the League of Nations Union, that they read the League's magazine *Educational Survey*, and that the work of the League be incorporated into the school syllabus. In that year also changes were made in the history and civics syllabus to include the aims, "to inculcate in the minds of the young ... a desire to promote peace among the nations" (Mulholland, 1990, p. 10). Thirty years later New Zealand joined a decision to adopt the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which in Principle 10 stated, "The child shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood." Again, in 1978, at the First Special Session of the United Nations on Disarmament, an undertaking was given: "to take steps to develop programmes of peace studies at all levels."

A major step towards peace education was taken in 1975 when the New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies was opened. This organization, which is still vigorously active, although precariously funded, had, as one of its principle aims, the promotion of the study of peace in school and tertiary institutions. In 1979 the Foundation published a book *Learning Peaceful Relationships*, a most useful book which has been reprinted ten times. A second small, but important, initiative was the establishment, in 1981, of the Mobile Peace Van, which continues to visit schools, leading classes in peace studies and assisting teachers with the development of peace studies programmes. As is so often the case with this kind of activity, the van continues to operate with minimal funding and is kept going largely

through the enthusiasm and dedication of people such as Jim Chapple who founded it, and Alyn Ware and Sandy Wiren, its present operators.

In 1978, in a survey conducted for the New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies, Levine and Spoonley reported a 62% support for peace studies (Levine & Spoonley, 1978) and again, in 1986, a poll commissioned by the Defence Review Committee reported that 80% of those polled supported the teaching of Disarmament and Arms Control issues in the classroom (Mulholland, 1990, p. 11). Nevertheless, it is true to say that, for much of their history, New Zealand schools have been anything but peaceful places. Up until recently corporal punishment was practised, particularly in boys secondary schools (this has now been abolished) and for boys in secondary schools, school military cadets activities were a compulsory part of their schooling. School cadets were also abolished some years ago.

Until 1984, then, peace education, despite some initiatives, had very little place in New Zealand schools. In July 1984, however, the conservative National government, which had ruled the country for nine years, was replaced by a Labour government. An important part of the new government's policy was a strong commitment to a nuclear free New Zealand. Since the Second World War, the country had been in a three way alliance with Australia and the United States, ANZUS, and, as a consequence, New Zealand harbours played host, on a more or less regular basis, to American nuclear powered and nuclear armed ships. The Labour government introduced a new law forbidding the entry of any ship or aircraft into New Zealand unless it could be certain that it was not carrying nuclear weapons. The effect of this law was essentially to break off the ANZUS alliance. In a speech delivered at Yale University on 25 April, 1989 the Prime Minister, David Lange, spelled out the reasons for this policy. The nuclear issue, he said, began as an environment issue, fuelled by France's continued testing of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific, an action which Lange termed "arrogant and selfish nuclear vandalism" (Lange, 1989, p. 3). To declare New Zealand nuclear free was the most effective measure of arms control the country could take. It was plain that we were not defended by nuclear weapons and did not ask to be defended by them. Lange was aware that it could be argued that such a decision was more easily taken in a country like New Zealand. That, he said, was exactly the point.

> "If a country like New Zealand cannot say no to nuclear weapons, what country could ever say no to nuclear weapons? If a country like New Zealand cannot be secure in the absence of a nuclear deterrent, what country can ever be safe without it?" (Lange, 1989, p. 5).

With all the controversy and debate that went on at this time over the Government's nuclear policy, the effective ending of the ANZUS alliance and French nuclear testing which culminated in 1985 in the bombing of the Greenpeace ship, Rainbow Warrior, in Auckland harbour by French government agents, it is perhaps not surprising that there was a new interest in peace education in schools. The new Minister of Education, Russell Marshall, was clearly strongly in support of peace education. He proposed that 'peace studies' should be introduced into the secondary school syllabus, a move which he said had a very practical aim – to teach adolescents to recognize and deal effectively with conflict. He was aware of the opposition this move would generate in some quarters, opposition which contained some valid comment, but which he regarded to a large extent as "confused or politically prejudiced" (Marshall, 1985, p. 17). Nevertheless, he was determined to continue.

> "If the result is less violence in the community, better industrial and race relations, improved relations between the sexes, between teacher and pupil, parent and child, then the idea will have paid its way" (p. 18).

Within the Department of Education's Curriculum Development Unit, two people were given responsibility for the development of peace education programmes in schools. A working party, set up by the Department in November 1984, consulted with teacher organizations, parents, teachers, principals, teachers college staff and other interested groups in workshops and meetings. These meetings resulted in 1986 in a discussion document *Peace Studies: Draft Guidelines* and a second *Update* the following year. This was a period of intensive activity in peace education, stimulated by the enthusiastic support of Russell Marshall. Some indication of the enthusiasm of teachers can be seen from the fact that my own university course, Peace Education attracted in its first two years 1986 and 1987 almost twice as many students as any other third year course in the department in those years.

It is instructive, six years or so later, to look back on these activities. Very little support was given to the idea of peace studies being developed as a separate subject in the school curriculum. Marshall envisaged it as being "integrated into the present core curriculum, for example as part of the present history or social studies syllabi" (Marshall, 1985, p. 18). The

authors of the draft guidelines agreed.

> "Peace studies is not conceived as a separate subject to be added on to the present curriculum nor does it displace basic subjects. Rather it is a dimension which can be readily integrated into existing subjects and has cross-curriculum implications" (Peace Studies: Draft Guidelines, 1986, p. 3).

There are good educational as well as practical arguments for such an approach, but there is no doubt that many people involved in peace education were concerned to counteract those critics who expressed opposition to what they saw as a new timewasting subject to be added onto an already overfull curriculum. The more controversial aspects of peace education were also downplayed. Despite the enormous public interest in the nuclear issue at the time, nuclear matters had only a small place in the draft guidelines, the overwhelming emphasis being on conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships, and community issues.

Strong support for peace education also came from the Report of the Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into Violence, under Sir Clinton Roper, which reported in March 1987. This report was an outcome of a high level of public concern about the incidence of violent crime. The Committee made two recommendations with respect to Peace Studies.

(1) That all teachers at all levels be given opportunities to discuss and implement Peace Studies as soon as possible and that resources necessary to that end be made available.

(2) That the public be informed of the true nature of "Peace Studies", the title being ambiguous.

During this period courses in Peace Education and Peace Studies were also started in universities. The Peace Education course at Victoria University of Wellington first taught in 1986 has already been mentioned. A second interdisciplinary course in Peace Studies was started in 1988 at Canterbury University. Both of these courses are still being taught. Other universities although not offering papers concerned solely with peace, touch upon peace issues and topics about conflict resolution in a variety of courses. The Centre for Peace Studies at the University of Auckland, for example, puts out a booklet designed to allow students to get an overview of the range of peace-related courses taught at the university and to encourage their interest in peace topics. However there appears to have been little explicit teaching of peace studies in the Colleges of Education which have responsibility for teacher education, although elements of peace studies were incorporated into other courses such as Social Studies and Health Education (McNicol, 1990).

Some significant publications were also produced. The New Zealand branch of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War commissioned an extremely useful series of *Nuclear Issues Fact Sheets* which were published in a single volume in 1986, and in the same year the New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies followed up its highly successful *Learning Peaceful Relationships* with a second book, this time for secondary schools, *Extending Peaceful Relationships*. The Department of Education produced two information pamphlets, *Partners in Peacemaking*, in 1988, which sought to explain peace studies, particularly for the benefit of parents, and in the following year *Writing a Peaceful Charter* which was sent to the new Boards of Trustees of Schools.

However, despite the care with which peace education was being introduced and the support it received from such powerful bodies as the Roper Committee, the critics still came out in force. When Russell Marshall, in 1985, announced the government's intention to introduce peace studies in schools, some Opposition M.Ps attacked the proposal, referring to it as "anti nuclear indoctrination", "brainwashing" and "sociological claptrap" (Mulholland, 1990, p. 6). Peace studies, said one, would "divide the country" and that the Socialist Unity Party was "forcing the Minister into the position of wanting to introduce peace studies into our schools" (ibid., p. 11). During the 1987 election campaign the Opposition spokesperson on education, Ruth Richardson, constantly expressed similar views. At this time a group called the Coalition of Concerned Citizens sent out pamphlets all over the country expressing the view that the government was using education for political purposes. Peace Studies, they said, was

> "being brought with the curriculum as a key element of Labour's political indoctrination. It is the Trojan Horse which Russell Marshall has allowed the Peace Movement to stable in our schools. It is a front for all kinds of propaganda – unilateral disarmament, radical feminism, liberalising of sexual attitudes, promotion of Maori sovereignty and exercises designed to change children's values" (Coalition of Concerned Citizens, 1987, p. 1).

In the General Election the Labour Government was returned, but massive changes were about to begin in education and the brief halcyon period of peace education was over. Russell Marshall was removed as Minister of Education, a position that was even more surprisingly taken over by the Prime Minister, David Lange, himself. This was the start of a period of radical reform of the administration of education, reforms which are too extensive and wide ranging to go into here. As part of the reform, the Department of Education, including the Curriculum Development Unit, was

abolished, to be replaced by a new smaller Ministry and many of those people most supportive of peace education either became redundant or moved on to other fields.

Not all was completely lost however. In 1990, substantial reports commissioned by the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control were published. One concerned Peace Education in Schools while the second was on the State of Peace Studies in New Zealand Tertiary Institutions. In her preface to the school report, Fran Wilde, Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, wrote of the "value and effectiveness of peace studies programmes in helping pupils and the wider community to resolve conflicts and develop peaceful relationships" (Mulholland, 1990, p. 1). The report contained results of a National Peace Studies Survey which involved taped interviews of parents, teachers and students from 60 schools, and a questionnaire sent out to a 5% sample of New Zealand schools. The aim of this survey was to discover the attitudes of parents and teachers towards peace studies, the extent to which peace studies has been implemented, the nature of these programmes and constraints on their further developments. The report reached the conclusion that the majority of New Zealanders supported the development of peace studies in schools, 75% of those surveyed expressing such support. It also found that a large number of teachers and schools were implementing programmes which developed many of the objectives of peace studies, such as self esteem, conflict resolution, cooperation, communication skills, environmental awareness, cross-cultural awareness and global awareness, but that most of these programmes were not called peace education. A considerable number of teachers were integrating the aims and objectives of peace studies into existing programmes of study or into their ways of teaching. Many teachers, however, felt reluctant to give their programmes a "Peace Studies" title out of fear of parental opposition, although it appears that negative reactions came from only a small proportion of parents. The students were, on the whole, extremely supportive of peace studies programmes.

The 1990 General Election saw the Labour Government lose power to the conservative National Party in one of the biggest landslide defeats any government has had in New Zealand's history. Despite its election promises of a more steady approach to change, the new government has, if anything, accelerated the move towards more "Rightwing" social and economic policies. In the present political climate there would appear to be little hope for peace education, at least in official circles. The new Minister of Edu-

cation, Lockwood Smith, is unlikely to support any such development. He had been in office less than a week before he ordered a reappraisal of a new secondary school English syllabus. His objection was that its exhortation to include more New Zealand and women authors in the literature study smacked of left-wing social engineering.

However, as is so often the case, whatever the official position, peace education undoubtedly is still a sturdy plant in many quarters. Much of this is, however the result of private initiative. The Mobile Peace Van still operates despite scarce funds and frequent breaks for repairs. The New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies, again despite inadequate funding, continues to provide excellent resources and strong support for Peace Education. They are at present engaged in a new program, "Cool Schools", in association with the Mobile Peace Van and Students and Teachers Educating for Peace. This programme undertakes peer mediation training, especially developed for New Zealand primary schools. It was introduced to a dozen primary schools in 1991. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has been active for many years in their support for peace education, and also distributes practical books such as *Winners All* and *How to be a Peace-full Teacher* for use in schools. Finally the Play for Life group is vigorous in its opposition to violence in the media and the sale of war toys.

On an official level some hope can perhaps be seen in the new draft science syllabus. The new Minister of Education has expressed his desire to build a "Back to Basics" curriculum based around four basic subjects: English, mathematics, science and technology (The National Curriculum of New Zealand, 1991). However, the recently released Draft Science Curriculum includes among its aims "helping students to make responsible and considered decisions about the use of science, technology and the environment" (Science in the National Curriculum, 1992, p. 8). Among the attitudes to be developed are "a positive and responsible regard for both the living and non-living components of the Earth's environment" (p. 15), and students are expected to "develop a responsibility for the guardianship of planet Earth and its resources" while becoming "familiar with personal, community and global effects of the application of science and technology" (p. 17). Clearly, although one would search in vain for any support for "peace education" or "peace studies" as such in official discourse, there is still much that the concerned teacher can do.

Note:

In this paper I have made no specific reference to Maori approaches to peace education and peace studies. The Science syllabus referred to above mentions, for example, preferred Maori learning and communication styles such as cooperative learning and holistic approaches. Clearly current Maori education developments such as Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa contain, within their aims and methods, many approaches consistent with peace education. Similarly there is much within Maori history that could serve as examples within a peace studies programme. Te Whiti's nonviolent resistance at the village of Parihaka in the 19th century and Princess Te Puea's campaign against Maori conscription in World War 1 are two well known examples. However, as a non-Maori, it is beyond my expertise to develop this theme.

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